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RECAPITULATORY

**HOW TO UNLEASH THE TALENTS AND ENERGIES OF AFRICAN
PEOPLE TO CONTRIBUTE EFFECTIVELY TO THE PROCESS OF
DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION**

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**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION
IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA**

12-16 February 1976
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Summary

What went wrong with Africa? Why is a continent so rich in resources suffering so much malnutrition, hunger, disease, and poverty? And why are its people not acting more effectively to change the situation? What actions should they be taking? These are the key questions this paper poses.

This paper examines the failure of development policy to date in Africa, analysing not only its effects but also its causes. In response to the question, "How to unleash the talents and energies of African people to participate in their own development and transformation, the paper suggests that the African people be allowed and encouraged to develop a level of consciousness to the prevalent crisis. It outlines a simple model that assists groups in structural analysis and explains that enlarging the role of Africans in the transformation process will require challenging and overthrowing "the ideology of the experts".

Africans' critical consciousness would create a popular understanding and awareness of the extent, nature and root causes of the problem. It would lead people to break "the culture of silence" and they would realize that they have the power to change their circumstances.

"The vision of a new society in Africa will need to be developed in Africa, born out of the African historical experience and the sense of continuity of African history. The African is not yet master of his own fate, but neither is he completely at the mercy of fate."(1)

Western scholars and governments, development practitioners and Africans themselves are now asking "what went wrong?" with prosperity. Three decades later, the reality is "a vicious interaction between excruciating poverty and abysmally low levels of productivity in an environment characterized by serious deficiencies in basic and social infrastructures" (2) and that "basic rights, individual freedom and democratic participation by the majority are often lacking in Africa." (3) Others ask more seriously what is the difference between now and the days of colonialism or the days of slavery. Is the difference not the same? Each era uses a different approach; always with the same result - an unbearable human condition bereft of self-determination and dignity.

The question of what went wrong is an important one to answer. Equally important is the issue of the role of Africans in promoting or abating this state of affairs. Where is the intellectual capacity of Africans, schooled or unschooled? Why has it not succeeded in arresting this great slide into poverty and dependence. Is that capacity able to see reality and name it and can that capacity do something about the African reality? This poses the fundamental question to be addressed by this paper on: How to unleash the Talents and energies of African people for their own development and transformation. This Conference has been organized on the assumption that Africans are not subjects in the processes that have given rise to the conditions that entrap them. It proposes that there is a key role for Africans to play in the transformation of their societies. However, if Africans are not the key actors in shaping their societies, who then are the key actors and to whose advantage? Are they willing to give up that advantage?

This paper gives a perspective on aspects of the African reality that have yet to be included in the scenario already built up by ECA on the African crisis. It proposes, among other things, that the level of consciousness of the African people to the crisis be raised in order that they might take action for the transformation of their communities and of Africa. As experiences to date have shown, the differences of economic interest and political power make it unreasonable to expect the political will that is necessary for systematic change in Africa to come from those in power. It must be fostered by mass movements that give central focus to the basic rights of the poor and demand a reorientation of policies, programmes and projects to that end. For this to occur, there must be the opening of political processes to accommodate greater expression of opinions and dissent, as well as participation by everyone in the decisions that affect their lives at all levels. Unleashing the vast potential of Africans to transform their continent will require consciousness raising, political participation by the majority of people and new economic and political orders at both national and international levels.

The process of transformation implies a recognition that the root causes of poverty are inadequate structures and systems which give rise to opportunities for oppression, exploitation and injustice. Transformation suggests the need to build new economic, political, legal and education structures.

In order to do so, people need to analyze their situation and find out the root causes of poverty and reorganize themselves in such a manner as to eliminate opportunities for exploitation. The underlying assumption is that structures are created by those in power to serve their own interests. If only few are in power, the interest of the majority is not served. Transformation aims to empower all so that all are involved in creating structures that serve the interest of all. People in the transformation process must be the subjects of their destiny. Development as practised in Africa today has come to mean putting in place the basic infrastructure that would compare Africa favorably with parts of the 'developed' world. The methodology for doing this is imported from outside of Africa, so are the resources. Poverty is interpreted as the lack of such infrastructure, the lack of resources to get them or even manage them. Development practice seeks to ensure that the resources are made available through grants or loans and that education and training will enable people to manage their resources in such a manner as to alleviate poverty. The people participate more as objects of the development process than as subjects. The following chart gives a comparative outline of the different approaches that might be employed based on what the cause of poverty is believed to be.

A clear definition of terminology is necessary for approaching the topic in a coherent manner. From the definition given above, it is clear that development and transformation, though both refer to change, cannot be used interchangeably. Neither is our present approach to development a necessary prerequisite for transformation. Three decades of global effort have gone into development for Africa. The end result to date is what the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has described as the African crisis, so severe that it challenges the very survival of the African people. (4) The majority of African people live at subsistence level. "The African crude facts are that two-thirds of the rural population and one-third of the urban population remain below the absolute poverty level." (5) More than 50 per cent of the least developed countries are on the African continent.

This whole situation exists not for the lack of trying. Time, money and great effort has gone into trying to stop the landslide into poverty. We are reminded by ECA that in 1979, no less an organization than the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted the Monrovia Strategy as Africa's input into the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Decade in the 1980s. In 1980, the same organization adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for implementing the Monrovia strategy with the primary objective of alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living of the African people. (6) This was followed by the Final Act of Lagos to promote subregional economic co-operation and integration. The subregional organizations are in place but so is poverty. The accessible supply of clean water, full security of person and possession are not quite in place yet and the human dignity is long eroded.

FOUR RESPONSES TO POVERTY

	1	2	3	4
A. Causes of the Problem	Circumstances beyond the control of local people Natural disasters Bad luck	Lack of Education Lack of resources causing low standard of living	Exploitation Domination Oppression	Inadequate structures
B. Goals	To retrieve suffering	To raise production To subdue nature	To challenge and overcome exploitative structure	To build new economic political, legal and education structures
C. Service programmes	Famine relief Refugee centres Care of disabled Child care Clinics	Technical training in agriculture, home industries, income producing activities, health care, savings and credit	Trade Unions, political parties and movements Conscientization pro-	Conscientization programmes Alternative structures, co-ops, workers councils, New forms of Education
D. Type of change involved	FUNCTIONAL CHANGE ←—————→ Non-conflictual models		STRUCTURAL CHANGE ←—————→ Conflictual models	
E. Type of leadership	Strong reliance on authority	Consultative	Shared but delegation of authority from base up strong discipline	Animation, enabling participatory Shared responsibility
F. Inspiration	Charity Help the poor	Help people to help themselves Vatican II	Liberation theology Denouncing evil Announcing Good	"Behold I make all things new"
G. Type of service	WELFARE	DEVELOPMENT	LIBERATION	TRANSFORMATION

Reprinted from Training for transformation, Book III Hope A., Timmel, S., Hodzi C. Mambo Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe, 1984.

40. However, it must be emphasized that in the context of the long-run, sustained economic growth, though necessary, will neither be sufficient nor, indeed, possible without a fundamental transformation aimed at removing the debilitating distortions in the present economic and social structures. In this context, it is pertinent to emphasize that socio-economic transformation has hitherto tended to be equated with a process of economic and social modernization that tries merely to replicate the patterns of production, consumption and institutions that prevail in the developed countries. This confusion has marred the proper conceptualization, design and implementation of a transformation process whose content and parameters are in resonance with African values and realities. This sombre realization points to the necessity for a new African transformation ethic that incorporates, rather than alienates, the present and future African realities - economic, political, social, cultural and environmental." (7)

It is important to explain that the socio-economic structures established in Africa during colonial times were put in place to ensure the flow of Africa's wealth to Western Europe. The establishment of these structures and necessary infrastructure, roads, railways, schools, churches, the civil service were an investment that brought excellent returns to its designers.

At the dawn of independence, Africa opted for a modernization approach to its development. This meant that every attempt would be made to forge African patterns of production, consumption, values and institutions in the image of those in Western Europe. This option was taken despite opposition from strong nationalists who wanted an African approach to development. The former colonial masters were more comfortable with the modernization approach and gave full support to the countries that took this option. Guinea (Conakry) was a classic example of a country opting for an African approach only to incur the full disapproval and subsequent departure of the French. The option for the modernization approach meant that modern technology and expert advisors (preferably from Europe) had to be brought in on an even larger scale than in colonial times to speed up the modernization process. International agencies put up a massive machinery to help Africa accomplish this goal.

Ereire describes such an option as symptomatic of a state of false consciousness, where the oppressed, immediately after overthrowing the oppressor, (8) observe how present African elite copy their colonial masters. Notice also the behaviour of soldiers right after coup d'Etats in Africa. They immediately unquestioningly take over the houses, cars and behaviour of their former oppressors. However, the expense of being like the oppressor without the means or philosophy of the oppressor leads to the same corruption and bribery which caused the coup in the first place.

In this state of false consciousness Africa once again turned over control of its development to the Western group of nations. They had the expertise and the money to make modernization/development happen. But this time Africa had to pay for the help by borrowing money to buy the technology and pay for the expertise using its raw materials as its source of wealth.

In so doing, African Governments set themselves up as guardians of people and put control of the peoples' destiny in the hands of foreign experts. The role of the African people was reduced to being guided and providing the labour to produce the primary commodities which would pay for the technology and experts. However, with falling commodity prices Africa became a net exporter of capital.

The preference for European consumables without the funds to pay for them has cost Africa dearly. The debt crisis is one manifestation. More latent are the nutrition imbalances, infant and maternal mortality rates, the deep crisis of confidence, the complete dependency syndrome and resulting excruciating poverty.

Africa depends on external sources of finance, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), multinational corporations and commercial banks for purchasing the consumables. The IMF is notorious for the inflexibility of its lending policies, even in these times of crisis. However, all of these institutions are seldom responsive to the needs of African borrowers because their loyalties lie elsewhere. The multinational corporations and the commercial banks are driven by the profit motive and the multilateral lenders owe their obedience to those who contribute the most to their budgets. For example, because voting in the World Bank is weighted by monetary contributions, low-income countries constitute only 35 per cent of decision-making capacity. (9) Being in desperate need of finance and technology, African countries then agree to abide by the rules of "aid".

The African crisis is sharply reflected in the lives of the people of Africa. Monthly family income is barely able to support family survival for more than a week. The people who had least to say at the negotiating table (the rural majority, women and the urban poor in Africa) are the hardest hit. As the debtor nations have turned to their creditors and the industrialized nations for help, they have found themselves straddled with the conditions of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Structural adjustment programmes generally require cuts in public spending and export promotion. Unfortunately, export promotion of cash crops usually occurs at the expense of domestic food production in the third world. The cuts in public spending - freezing wages and unemployment, cutting food and fuel subsidies and expenditure on health and education - are felt in people's stomachs before they are felt in government coffers. Balance-of-payments deficits mean that a region that is expected to import one-third of its food needs by the year 2000 (10) will not be able to feed its people. The Economist argues that it is the middle class rather than the poor who bear the brunt of the policies because they are the main recipients of government spending and subsidies.

"The scope for cutting public spending in developing countries without hurting the poor is broad enough for stabilization to succeed In the short term, adjustment is a threat to the middle classes, not the poor. Later everybody gains." (11)

The editors of the Economist are mistaken. We cannot know what will happen "later" and therefore cannot dispute the conclusion of their statement. However, we do know that the impact of the SAP cutbacks include poor nutrition and sanitation, increasing mortality (especially child and maternal), decreasing employment and the possibility of political and civil turmoil. And these affect the poor as much as, if not more than, the middle class. The middle class, at least, has an option to leave the country.

One of the saddest examples of these far-reaching effects of the whole situation is the effect on women. The SAPs have coincided with a time when the Decade for Women has raised the hopes of many African women, who are the poorest of the poor. African women are now expecting greater access to education, health care and credit, such as are required for them to adequately fulfill their productive and reproductive roles. However, they will be called upon, as the primary producers of food and health care, to fill in the gaps created by cuts in government expenditure. Already it has become imperative for African women to begin the work day at 3-4 a.m. rather than at 5-6 a.m. An imbalance between the nurturing roles and the economic roles of women is inevitable under these circumstances and already quite manifest in the ways women must now organize their days to make ends meet. Economic constraints have created conditions which have exposed women to higher probabilities of violence and lessened the opportunities for them to extricate themselves from environments that do violence to them. The development of women is in danger of never becoming a reality as literacy programmes, nursery schools, health care, extension workers and all such support services fade. Even though African women have proven themselves to be the masters of survival, these facts refute the argument that the poor will not suffer as much as the middle class. And in the big picture of African development, it would appear that there is little chance of meeting the hopes that have been generated.

Developing critical consciousness

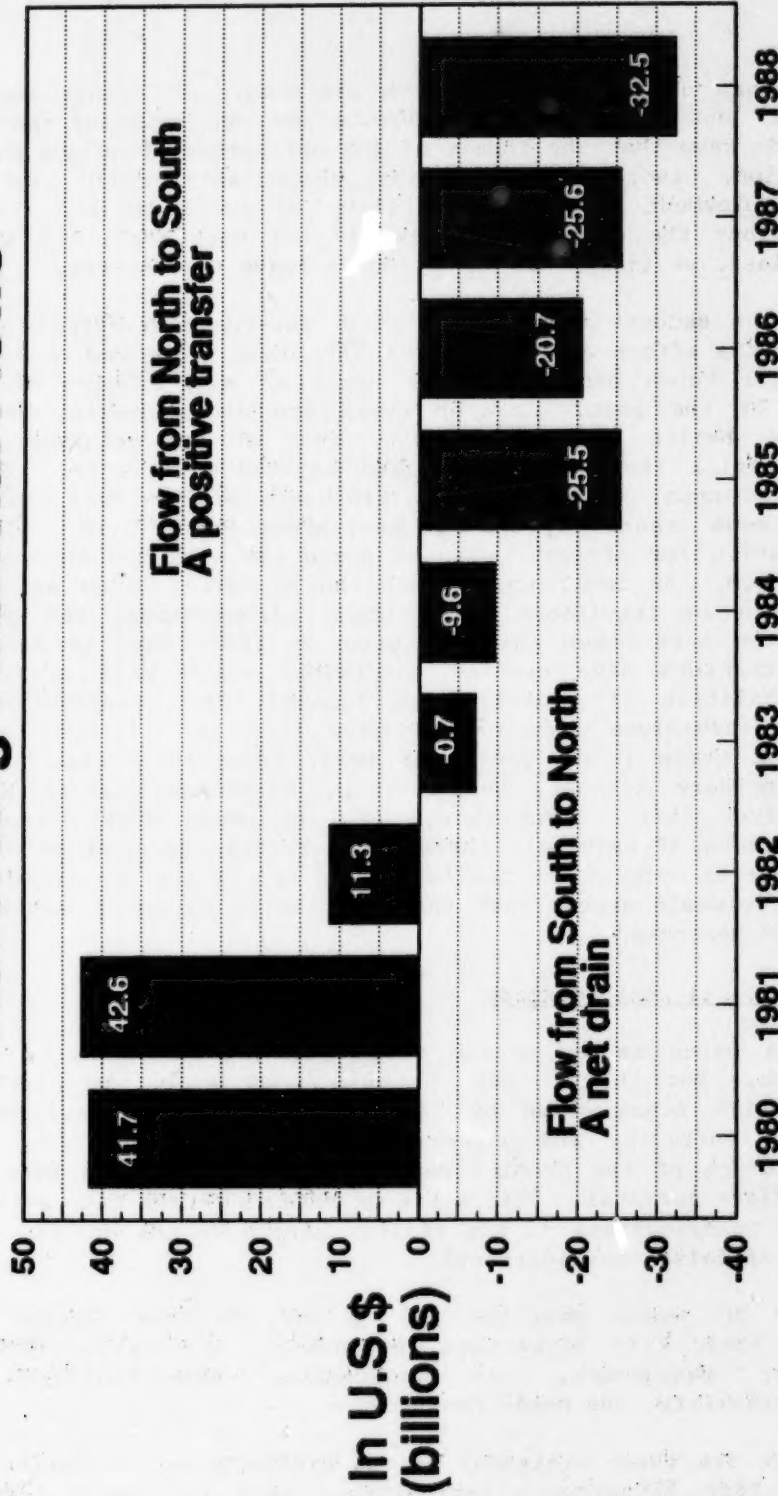
All this being as it is one would have expected a mass movement for transformation. But this is not the case. The anger and distress at this state of affairs seems muted by the usual African cultural trait of high tolerance for suffering and hardships. Consciousness of the full extent, nature and causes of the problem seems blunted by pressing needs and action towards immediate survival. This state of affairs brings into serious question the level of consciousness of the African people to the crisis. Is it still at the level of false consciousness?

How do people describe and to what do they ascribe the changes in their life situation: corruption, witchcraft, greedy leaders, poor management, bad government, neo-colonialism, political instability, the World Bank-IMF?

What are their attitudes to the difficulties, suffering and changes in life situation: resignation, wait for God's justice, better leaders and better government would help, more hard work is needed, other countries must be better than mine?

Africa, A Net Exporter of Capital

Reversing Financial Flows



Developing Nations: Net Transfer of Resources 1980-1988

Sample of 88 nations - covers private direct investment, private loans, official flows

Source: UN World Economic Survey 1989

Published by the UN Department of Public Information

September 1989

What actions do they take to improve their lives: continue begging for help, pray more and join religious groups, change leaders, overthrow governments, work hard and get others to work harder and more systematically, move abroad where it is more comfortable?

If indeed there were popular understanding and awareness of what the true extent, nature and root causes of the problem are and if, for a brief moment in time, there were popular belief that people have the power to change their circumstances, there would be a movement for transformation in Africa. Awareness of the problem is fundamental to applying one's energies and talents to it. What is required now is for the consciousness of our reality to be raised to the level of critical consciousness which enables people to read the world, not just the word. That is, it enables a clear description of reality and an analysis of the root causes of that reality rather than just the symptoms.

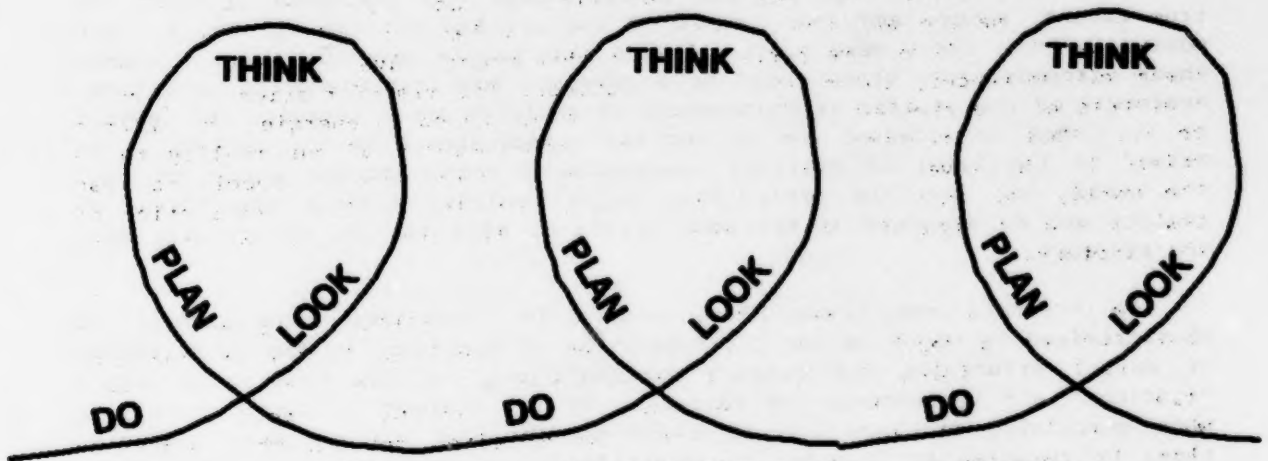
In Freire's own words, "the critically transitive consciousness is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems, by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations: by the testing of one's "findings" and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old - by accepting what is valid in both old and new. Critical transitivity is characteristic of authentically democratic regimes and corresponds to highly permeable, interrogative, restless and dialogical forms of life - in contrast to silence and inaction, in contrast to the rigid, militarily authoritarian state presently prevailing in Brazil, an historical retreat which the usurpers of power try to present as a re-encounter with democracy. There are certain positions, attitudes and gestures associated with the awakening of critical awareness, which occur naturally due to economic progress. These should not be confused with an authentically critical position, which a person must make his own by intervention in and integration with his own context. "Conscientizacao" represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural by-product of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions."(12)

The following chart gives the various levels of consciousness or awareness, typical community attitudes that exemplify each level and types of actions that animators could take.

Analysis a tool for critical consciousness

Progress towards acquiring a state of critical consciousness is enhanced and promoted by a constant process of analysis. Analysis helps community groups to reflect on root causes, to plan actions and evaluate the suitability of these actions. The process of analysis need not be complicated. A simple Freirian approach for helping participants engage in a process of critical reflection on what they are doing can be quite useful for community groups.

It is the constant process of action/reflection/action/reflection that helps groups to look for root causes to their problems a model for the process can be shown as follows:



It is an analysis of practice and process which develops amongst people the practice of thinking about practice. Often the tendency in popular conversation is to spend much time describing and bemoaning our life situation. To this must be added the additional aspects of analysis and planning for action. Hence the continuous process of action (do) analysis (look, think) plan for action again.

In community groups, the process of getting to root causes is enhanced by the use of another Freirean technique of the analysis of codes. Codes are simple encapsulations of reality in an art form. Popular art forms should be used because they can be produced easily and they encourage participation. The codes should be analyzed by the use of the following questions:

Clear and full description of what is happening or happened in the code with every one participating.

Why does it happen continuously asking "but why" until the root cause is reached.

Does it happen here(relating the code to own reality).

What can we do about it (planning for action to eradicate root causes).

Level	FOUR LEVELS OF AWARENESS The Community situation Typical attitudes-actions	FOUR LEVELS OF AWARENESS Types of Assistance	
		Approaches that reinforce Present situation	Approaches which contribute to transformation
Closed or broken consciousness - Naive - Dependent - Alienated - Suppressed	Closed Societies, not open to change, or Broken societies where new patterns seem impossible to understand Culture of silence, fatalism or resignation "It must be the will of God" The way things are is the only way they can ever be Magical explanation for happenings, e.g. curses, bewitching Mature, culture and history are given to us not shaped by us, unquestioning acceptance of explanations of those in power, "that the rich deserve to be rich and poor are lazy and ignorant" Unchanging repetition of activities to meet basic needs, traditional rituals, celebrating great deeds of the past but little effort to change present or future	Paternalistic approaches - doing things for people Responding to needs as emergencies free handouts. Building dependency Offering opportunities for advance of individuals but not developing communal responsibility for whole community Sharing life of the poor without getting involved with them in a struggle to transform the situation	Identifying social and economic classes finding people and groups more aware, articulate, able to explain causes and influence others Finding aspects of local religion and culture with liberating message Enabling people to break the culture of silence to speak openly and honestly Trusting their experience Gain skills by forming and running organizations to meet local needs
Awakening consciousness - Alert - Rebellious - Critical of people and events but not questioning established system	Signs of limited change, e.g. technology, building social patterns, conflicts developing between groups with different interests Awareness of inequality, injustice, not sharing "the fruits of independence, but dealing with symptoms, not root causes" Attempts to reorganize some elements of economic, social and cultural life, e.g. demand for better wages, changed family relationships, great faith in more opportunities for formal schooling Local actions to meet immediate needs, "Harambee" or self-help projects	Prompt action to satisfy immediate needs Regrouping of the people around local leaders who "take over" actions initiated by the community Small community development projects with authoritarian leadership which do not train people in democratic participation and decision-making	Enabling different groups to express their insights, expectations and reasons for action Searching for causes of injustice, developing new patterns of decision-making and small projects involving a process of joint planning Action/reflection/action, etc. Avoiding taking "most aware" out of community, but channelling their insight and commitment into shared community responsibility
Reforming consciousness - Start of struggle to improve functioning of the system	Recognition of different classes with opposing interests, open conflicts Beginning of trade unions, farmers associations, etc, desire for self-determination, reliance on own reserves Moving from perception to analysis, starting to question "Why do the rich get richer while the poor get poorer?" "Why do some have so much power?"	Large organizations with centralized authoritarian patterns of work which impose ideology on others not challenging them to think for themselves Desire to share in economic growth but not questioning the type of growth	Models which help groups analyze situation critically and plan action - pinpointing clashes of interests - between classes in society - within the organization Constant dialogue between leaders and masses

Level	FOUR LEVELS OF AWARENESS The Community situation Typical attitudes-actions	Types of Assistance	FOUR LEVELS OF AWARENESS
	A struggle to share power in partnership with the ruling group, still little questioning of pyramid structure of authority or of some ruling class values, e.g., laws that protect property more than people Demands for higher wages, shorter hours, use of slogans Struggle for existing power positions, different faces at the top, not change of structure	Recognition of only one type of valid action Seeing politics primarily in terms of elections	Action/Reflection cycle leading to constant evaluation of values, aims and strategies Relate struggle to processes of history
Liberating and transforming consciousness	Development of new relationship between classes - Deep questioning of old values and express of new values - Creative development of new types of structures expressing these values Recognition that freedom is never achieved "once and for all". Therefore personal and group involvement is a permanent process of renewal and liberation, constantly guarding against new patterns of oppression	Over-emphasis on technology for the sake of efficiency Allowing tribal, racial or cultural differences to divide those who basically share the same interests Haphazard attacks on international imperialism rather than careful strategy	Support constant struggle within the movement to reflect on personal and organizational life Try creative new experiments Get rid of authoritarian structures Develop self-management and active participation at all levels Keep open communication with grass roots Building international solidarity and strong links with other groups involved in similar struggles

Reprinted from Training for Transformation Book III Hope A., Timmel, S.,
Hodzi C. Mambo Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe, 1984.

The story is told of native Americans (American Indians) in Minnesota who had been approached by a wealthy church to state what their needs were in order that an appropriate package of assistance would be organized for them. The native Americans welcomed the initiative of the church and requested that they be given time to give thought to the matter. An answer would be given at a meeting to be arranged later. When church officials arrived for the next meeting the native Americans said yes they had indeed given great thought to the matter but remained greatly puzzled by one question to which they wanted an answer from the church. The question: why is it that you are so wealthy, you have so much extra to give and we are so poor we have to receive from you?

Structural analysis is also an important tool for developing critical consciousness. It should be undertaken at the micro and macro levels. It should start with the immediate circumstances and situation of the people and should be done by the people themselves. Because the local situation is very much affected by the larger system of society, there is also need to assist local groups to connect the analysis of the local situation to an analysis of the wider society within a global context.

A simple but useful model for assisting groups do structural analysis is to analyze the three basic subsystems of their society (political, economic, cultural) at both micro and macro levels. The analysis should be of the elements of the subsystem and how it works as well as how the subsystems inter-relate towards the liberation or oppression of the people.

"Economic and social subsystem (survival, production and reproduction)

Chief means of production

Who owns them

Who works

What is the mode of production? (What type of arrangement is there between who works for whom?

Is it feudal, capitalistic?)

Who controls distribution of goods? How?

What different classes emerge from the mode of production?

What are the relationships between the different classes?

What effect does this have on relationships in families, different tribes, other groups, etc.?

How does production relate to reproduction?

Organization level (political)

Who has the power to make decisions?

From which class are they?

Who makes the laws?

For whose benefit are they made?

How are the laws enforced?

Beliefs and values (cultural)

What does the society believe about itself?

What are its chief values?

Are the expressed values and the actual values the same?

Who promotes official values? How?

Ask the group to reflect on their answers which have now been written on newsprint.

1. What links do you see between the different levels?
2. How is the economic situation influencing the legal and political level?
3. How do these two levels influence the level of values?
4. How are the real values and the expressed values of the people influencing the political and the economic levels?"(13)

The practice of analysis in order to develop critical consciousness is important if Africans are to take charge of turning the direction of the present crisis. We must take the time to think through carefully what we are doing and why and thus become subjects of our existence. All too often this process is left to experts. One of the fundamental premises of the development industry is the need for foreign experts for transfer of technology and resources to the underdeveloped world. However, it has sadly been noted that "expatriate technical co-operation officers did not always contribute very much to the transfer either of resources or technology." (14)

Confidence in experts

The premise of the game of development to date has been what might be called "the ideology of the expert". Those who make a career of development have always prided themselves on teaching others. Development policies and those who make them have often claimed, with the best intentions, authority to define the problems and strategies and in so doing have excluded the very people they aim to help. Unfortunately, the present development industry has not welcomed many Africans into its classroom for experts. The political and economic system, both nationally and internationally, is controlled by a small core (or centre) of wealthy elites. Technical knowledge that leads to increased productivity and wealth, also at the centre, is the driving force of the system, and the domain of the experts who are paid by the wealthy elite.

This entire state of affairs is further exacerbated by the crisis of confidence which Africa experiences. The methods of operations of the development industry rests on the premise that Africans, for a variety of good reasons, are unable to take responsibility for their own development. They are thought of as not having the expertise, experience, resources nor a sense of accountability to manage their own development. While the international community displays this attitude towards African Governments, the same attitude is displayed by governments and intellectuals to the bulk

of the African people. Who really believes that the ordinary African communities are able to take control of and successfully orchestrate the improvement of their own lives without the input of foreign capital and expertise? People have been systematically nurtured on a healthy diet of disregard for their own knowledge, systems, culture, food, etc., for two centuries.

The African Governments, many of whom now are no longer elected by the people, serve as intermediaries between the development machinery and the people, and have become an important part of that machinery. They interpret the needs of the people and administer foreign inputs for the benefit of the people. In fact, much of the blame for the failure of development efforts is usually attributed to weak management systems in these governments, corruption and lack of accountability. This weakness in the government structures and functioning has given rise to the ascendancy of the expert.

Theoretically, African Governments determine the development strategies. However, in view of the great dependence on foreign finances, these governments must accept the advice of foreign advisers. These governments are more accountable to international agencies than to their own people. Civil servants themselves can explain how prepared they are for experts and missions and what their level of involvement, much less than leadership of, these missions are. Civil servants in some favourite countries now barely have time to be productive in the development process. They are constantly involved in the process of receiving missions and accommodating the priorities of aid agencies. There is little time in this process to consult the beneficiaries and little time for critical analysis. Even that is done by consultants and experts.

Environment for participation

In the late 1960s and all during the 1970s, radical thinkers examined the practice of development and admonished for a change in the direction of greater participation of the people. The ecumenical movement of the churches called for greater social justice and saw that this would not be possible without the participation of the people in the analysis of the causes of injustice and in making decisions to change the situation. Many of these writings and training for participatory development at the grass-roots can be found in the World Council of Churches, the Commissions for Social Justice of the Catholic Church and the conference of churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Latin American dialectics evolved in liberation theology and led to a great discomfort with the use of the word 'development'. A clear description of the reality (la realidad) of the Latin American situation which peasants were encouraged to make, showed that development was not taking place. It was necessary for peasants to develop critical consciousness, to seek to build a just society, to alleviate poverty and to liberate themselves from exploitation and oppression.

However, such an analysis is only possible where the environment encourages and permits free thinking, responsible expression of ideas and creative endeavours. The socio-political environment that exists in many African countries does not encourage any of these. Culturally also, Africans, particularly those south of the Sahara, seem to have difficulty graciously accepting the success of fellow Africans. Africans seem more at ease seeing foreigners in major control of economic undertakings than seeing fellow Africans. At the local level, there are many Africans who will not extend themselves and venture into major production undertakings for fear of running afoul with the political power or of being bewitched. To be successful, one seems to need the protection of a political grandfather or a good witchdoctor.

On a policy basis, the rules and regulations for productive enterprises are more in favour of foreign owners than of local owners. Even though Africans with the means are unable to invest at home either for political or social reasons, they are also neither able to invest seriously in a neighbouring African country. The climate in that country will favour non-Africans more. As a result, they invest abroad.

The outdated structures of the public sector serve largely to frustrate talented Africans who have acquired considerable experience and knowledge and would like to use the same for the common good. There is little space in these rigid structures to express opinions and undertake creative endeavours. Besides, knowing too much threatens the authority and status of others.

Breaking the culture of silence

The environment for undertaking any social or structural analysis must be one that breaks the culture of silence and apathy. Analysis is couched in dialogue. Even if analysis begins at an individual level, it is necessary to draw as many participants as possible into the process of critical reflection. Such reflection on the root causes of problems would then lead to common decision-making on actions to take in order to solve problems or improve the conditions of life.

Breaking the culture of silence, though a major challenge given the political practices to which we have grown accustomed, should not be insurmountable. Africa is known to have an excellent tradition of dialogue and popular participation in decision-making. Amongst the Kpelles of Liberia, the Chief begins the discussion of any serious matter by first getting the opinion of the youngest and passes the matter on up the hierarchy until all opinions have been heard. His opinion is then merely a summary of the majority opinion.

Dissenting opinions are scarcely tolerated now due to very prevalent feelings of insecurity related to the fear of losing power and prestige, both personal and national. Men do not ask the opinions of their wives, teachers do not ask the opinions of students, managers do not ask the opinions

of workers, parents do not ask the opinion of children, and so forth. The only opinion that seems worth expressing is an opinion in agreement with those who have power to control your life, regardless of its base. The culture of silence weighs heavy on the continent. It has buried Africa's brightest and best and has tortured its bravest.

Communication is crucial to transformation. Not only communication from North to South, from the urban areas to the rural, but also communication from South to North, from rural to urban areas. Of paramount importance is information that flows from the people to the leaders. And because of its key role in development, there must be recognition of the disparities in access to or control of the means of communication. Radio, the most accessible means of communication, is invariably controlled by governments. The excitement for the new International Information Order wore off as soon as it became apparent that it meant giving a voice to the voiceless at home.

Transformation can not take place without dialogue. A true process of dialogue demands that all parties have equal time to listen and to speak. The present code of leadership oppoitions speaking time to leaders and listening time to the masses. Millions of Africans today are silent, either because they have little confidence that what they say has value in changing a powerful system, or, if they have confidence, will not say what should be said for fear of being dispossessed, even of life. True dialogue is based on deep respect for one another. It requires that each has faith in what the other has to say, trust that the other will express fully their thoughts, desire to listen accompanied by effort to help the other to express themselves and belief in and value for the other person's experiences. In view of the pervasiveness of the culture of silence, each one should begin to check his/her habit of listening. This applies particularly to those in leadership positions, by virtue of education, political, military, economic or religious power. A necessary first step to unleashing the talents and energies of Africans to participate in their own real development and transformation is to change the power structure of communication. A popular poster circulated in Liberia two years after the 1980 coup d'Etat showed a face with a padlock on the lips captioned my: MY EYES ARE OPEN.

It is in praise of the art of gracious writing that ECA will be forgiven couching the horror of the African crisis in such intellectualism:

"In this context, it is pertinent to emphasize that socio-economic transformation has hitherto tended to be equated with a process of economic and social modernization that tries merely to replicate the patterns of production, consumption and institutions that prevail in the developed countries. This confusion has marred the proper conceptualization, design and implementation of a transformation process whose content and parameters are in resonance with African values and realities. This sombre realization points to the necessity for a new African transformation ethic that incorporates, rather than alienates, the present and future African realities - economic, political, social, cultural and environmental". (15)

Conclusion

This paper has proposed that the African transformation ethic will be born of Africans in dialogue with one another undertaking comprehensive analysis of their reality in an environment that allows this to happen. This process of analysis will help Africans to develop critical consciousness which is the foundation of transformation. Critical consciousness transfers the power of knowledge and the search for it to the people and not to the expert. It will use and develop the potential of the people to mount a frontal attack on poverty. It gives a voice to the voiceless to participate in decision-making and restores human dignity by making the people the subject of their own existence. Perpetuation of the present state of arrested false consciousness cuts us from our roots and leads to the great wandering of hapless people: intellectuals moving to Europe and America, a high percentage of the continent's population are refugees and the rest dying slowly at home.

How is the awakening to take place? Transformation of itself is a conflictual model. How can the process of transformation take place while at the same time avoiding the conflicts that are characteristic of the Latin-American experience of oppressed groups in society seeking liberation? Will those who have a vested interest in the resources of Africa, and their proteges in Africa allow a peaceful transformation to take place? The cases of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea (Conakry) are frightening examples of the powerlessness of Africans to control their own destiny.

If the struggle for independence could be fought and won, so can this.

The crisis, though bitter, presents an opportunity not to be missed. It should serve as a basis for discussion and action by community groups all over Africa. Where are the popular communicators to produce the Khartoum Declaration in popular form? In its present form, it will remain a document for expert meetings. Is it being discussed in the schools, not just for information and memorization, but for analysis and action? The reality of the crisis is the life of the people. It must be discussed in the villages for analysis and subsequent action. What analysis and discussions are taking place amongst interest groups - professionals, farmers, workers, women's groups? How can the analysis and actions of these groups complement each other to lead to national action?

The major constraints to critical analysis and action for transformation will come from those at home and abroad who feel their power threatened by popular analysis and popular action. Prominent in this category will be African Governments and the African elite who have had the power to control the lives of people and who benefit from the work of the people at the expense of the people. There have been some indications in the actions of African Governments towards more participation of people at the local level in decision making. The decentralization of planning and development giving local authorities more say in decision-making (disengagement du gouvernement or district focus) is a healthy one: care must be taken to ensure that the people and local authorities have carefully analyzed what they are doing and why.

The ascendance of "one-man states" and fathers of the nation should be analyzed for its potential to liberate or to oppress the people.

Wherever and whenever possible, Africans should encourage a "do-it-yourself" attitude. Knowledge is born of experience and reflection on that experience. Do it, analyze the experience and do it better the next time. Confidence is built on experience.

Planning and the role of planners will have to change where people become the subjects of their own transformation. Planners will become facilitators, helping to make linkages and making recommendations for policies that promote the action and participation of the people.

There must be popular reconsideration of the concept of Africa as a poor continent. Such popular analysis must look at the entire phenomena of resource flows out of Africa (see chart on Resource Flows).

At the community level there is much to analyze about resource flows from local communities; the migration of able-bodied and enlightened people to town, deforestation, marketing of agricultural products, allocation and use of taxes reinvestment of savings in local situations and outflow of information. The same analysis can also be done at macro-level. Actions taken as a result of such analysis should help towards maintenance of a self-sustaining resource base.

As we stand on the threshold of the 1990s, it is important that all agencies engaged with Africa measure their relevance to Africa's transformation and progress by the extent to which they contribute to the drain of wealth from Africa and the extent to which Africans are the subjects of the activities of the agencies. African Governments are particularly challenged to reflect on practices of government and measure these practices against the criteria of the promotion of justice and critical consciousness, the extent to which they have worked to block the unabated flow of wealth from Africa, how the structures and values of government contribute to the poverty of Africa. This will not be an easy undertaking for any African Government but they must find the strength to rise to the occasion in the interest of the survival of Africa. The crisis demands it.

Development agencies in partnership with governments, the present trustees for the poor and guardians of rationality will need to see themselves as trustees of the dignity, self-determination and liberation of the people, guardians of justice to end exploitation. Development assistance must analyze their modes of operation and determine to what extent they are part of the problem rather than the solution. They must also determine how they can help the people become subjects of their own destiny. It is now quite apparent that the Marshall Plan has not worked for Africa, a producer of primary commodities coming out of a colonial experience. Both development agencies and governments have a responsibility of sticking to the problem until it is solved. Governments live with the problem and therefore have little choice. Development agencies on the other hand are already making loud sounds of aid fatigue and their return to Eastern Europe.

Africa's recovery and transformation must take place in the 1990s. The margin of error at our disposal now is that between "kwashiokor" and "marasmus". The process, therefore, must begin now - every day gone is a day too late to practise new values, to take action together with others to build an African future and make our contribution to improving the quality of relationships in our global village.

Notes

- (1) Cited in Whitaker, J.S., How Can Africa Survive?, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988, p.197.
- (2) United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), "African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation", Addis Ababa, 1988, p.1.
- (3) UNECA, op. cit., p.7.
- (4) United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), "Towards a Human-Focused Approach To Socio-economic Recovery and Development in Africa; The Khartoum Declaration", Addis Ababa, 1988, p. 1.
- (5) Damiba, Pierre Claver, "Alleviation of Critical Poverty and Improvement of Economic Management in sub-Sahara Africa" in Africa and UNDP Partnership in the 1990s, World Development, New York 1989, Vol. 11, p. 43.
- (6) UNECA, "African Alternative Framework", op. cit., p. 9.
- (7) op. cit., p. 12.
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- (11) "Poor Man's Burden: A Survey of the Third World", The Economist, 23 September 1989, p. 25.
- (12) Friere, Paulo, "Education for Critical Consciousness", New York, Seabury, 1973, p. 29.
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- (14) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Africa and UNDP Partnership in the 1990s, Vol. I, World Development, New York, 1989.
- (15) UNECA, "African Alternative Framework", op. cit., p. 12.

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